

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Carol A. Murray, Commissioner

For Immediate Release

April 15, 2003

Contacts: Robert Barry
Project Manager
(603) 271-2107
Public Information Office
(603) 271-6495

**MANCHESTER AIRPORT ACCESS ROAD PROJECT RECEIVES
FEDERAL APPROVAL VIA "RECORD OF DECISION"**

The US Federal Highway Administration today issued a "Record of Decision" for the Manchester Airport Access Road, thus enabling the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to move forward with the project's final design and right-of-way process.

The "Record of Decision" addresses all of the issues raised by the projects' Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and certifies that all regulatory requirements have been addressed and satisfied. The US Army Corps of Engineers must still issue a federal wetlands permit before construction can begin. A state wetlands permit was issued last November.

"This is an important milestone in the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's effort to improve traffic flow in and around Manchester Airport and improve the economic vitality of the state," says NHDOT Commissioner Carol Murray. "This decision indicates that federal officials recognize the need and importance of this project."

The Manchester Airport Access Road project plan calls for the construction of four-lane, median-divided, limited access highway (approximately two miles) providing direct access to Manchester Airport from the F.E. Everett Turnpike in Bedford. The current estimated project cost is \$115 million, including \$75 million for construction.

Since the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the NHDOT has revised the alignment of the bridge crossing the Merrimack River approximately 350 feet to the south to avoid a bald eagle nesting area.

It's estimated that construction of the project will begin approximately 18 months from the start of the final design process. Some right-of-way for the project has been acquired involving land that was subject to imminent development or property owners with extreme hardships. The NHDOT will now initiate the right-of-way process on those land parcels requiring total acquisition, as well as property identified for eagle habitat preservation, wetland conservation and wildlife corridors to be preserved as part of the project.

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